

# center for Land economics

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October 7, 1974

Mr. Bernard Ludwig  
Chairman, Social Studies Department  
Jamaica High School  
167-01 Gothic Drive  
Jamaica, New York

Dear Mr. Ludwig:

You are invited to participate in a new effort to document the incidence of land ownership and land use in our city. This effort is being sponsored by a national organization called LEAF, Land Equality and Freedom, of which I am the East coast Representative. This a private, not for profit, undertaking which has as its goal the presentation of a full array of facts on who owns America during the forthcoming bicentennial.

I am seeking to enlist the aid of faculty and students in the New York City area for the accomplishment of this task. The research effort of students may well be considered worthy of academic credit in almost every area and discipline of the social sciences, since it involves seeking, selecting and utilizing data from original public sources, and presenting it in a logical array. Further analysis of the data could also be made according to the requirements of the course or the interests of students. Wherever possible, students should be encouraged to assemble the data of their own home locations and neighborhoods. This provides not only convenience and familiarity, but an additional motivation to seek out the pertinent facts about where one lives. Starting with a single tax block, a student can proceed to cover at least one census tract during the course of a semester on the basis of three to four hours of effort weekly.

Our early experience with this project indicates that students find this research both stimulating and worthwhile, and some have shown particular aptitude for digging out the unusual instances of questionable practice in the ownership, use, evaluation, and taxation of real property. This can, of course, lead to the discovery of vital information at the local level as well as provide the basis for an exciting career in public interest research.

Your involvement in this project by encouraging students to participate and in providing credit for doing so, would be a most welcome contribution to what we believe will be a significant enhancement of the public consciousness. Beyond such psychic rewards, LEAF will defray any expenses incurred in the organization and conduct of this research effort.

An introduction and outline is enclosed. I would be delighted to discuss any aspect of this with you in any further detail.

Very truly yours,

*Philip Finkelstein*  
Philip Finkelstein

PF/jb

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